

A  
LETTER  
I N  
ANSWER  
To Two main  
QUESTIONS  
O F  
The First Letter  
T O A  
DISSENTER.

- I. *Whether Protestant Dissenters ought to refuse the proposed Legal Toleration, Including Catholick Dissenters.*
- II. *Whether Protestant Dissenters ought to expect the said Toleration, until the next Succession, upon the suggested hopes of Excluding Catholics.*

---

L O N D O N,

Printed for M. T. in the year MDCLXXXVII.

22



A

## LETTER

T O

Dissenters, &amp;c.

GENTLEMEN,

**I** Doubt not but you have met with a Seditious Letter, Addressed to a *Dissenter*, upon occasion of His Majesties late Declaration of Indulgence, and Subscribed T. W. The care which the Author hath taken to have them dispersd among you, shews his extraordinary Zeal, but whether to promote ~~their~~ security, and <sup>your</sup> the designed establishment of it, or to destroy (as much as in him lies) the rational hopes of ever obtaining it; is the great *Question*, which in this Paper I shall endeavour to decide.

It would be tedious to follow him through all his turnings and windings, and the little Artifices of whining *Cant*, and gross palpable flattery and hypocrisy; they are only gay colours, and amusements, to catch the incautelous. It would be also altogether impertinent, to persuade Men, that the Church of *England* hath always Persecuted them, whose backs carry the fresh marks of their cruelty, and the deep furrows which *she* hath formerly plow'd upon them, remain indelible scars and cicatrises, to *her* eternal shame, and *their*

A 2

own

Picking a Chalk 1/2 / 34 No. 68 2/6 (842)

own best Argument for Mercy, and Plea for their former and late unfortunate miscarriages.

His most unjust and malicious reflecting upon the King, fall rather under the notice and care of the Government, than defence of any private hand.

Passing by therefore all such *stuff*, as would discredit, and prejudice the better intentions of a sincerer Pen, I shall reduce his long flourishing Epistle, under the consideration of these two main *Questions*.

Question 1. Whether Protestant Dissenters, in prudence and conscience, ought to refuse the present Legal Toleration, upon account of Including Catholick Dissenters, within the same equal Toleration?

Question 2. Whether Protestant Dissenters, in prudence and Conscience, ought to expect the proposed Toleration, until the next Succession; upon the single consideration, that Catholick Dissenters might probably be then Excluded?

The first *Question* (were it not for the condition annexed) would be of all, the most idle and frivolous. It were to ask a Man, whether in prudence, he ought to part from the present possession of his Estate, and live (*he knows not how long*) without it, upon the hopes and promise of *he knows not whom*? that the same Estate would be most probably restor'd to him, *he knows not when*. I shall not therefore insist upon so ridiculous a *Question*, but apply my self to the consideration of the annexed condition.

Catholicks, (like all other Dissenters,) are to be consider'd under two Capacities, the one *Religious*, the other *Civil*. As to their *Religious Capacity*, I conceive they ought not to be Excluded the intended Toleration, neither in prudence, nor in conscience.

First, *not in prudence*. It hath been a constant debate, between the Reformed Kings of England, and their Protestant Dissenters, whether Conscience in matters of Faith and



*and Worship, ought to be forc'd ?* The civil Magistrate, against his own Interest, hath always carried it in the *affirmative* ; whence you may easily guess, what Counsellors have been most in vogue : But as false Maxims, like false Foundations, are ever ruinous to their superstructures, (and what mischiefs, have happened from hence, we all know,) so 'tis impossible their faults and errors should remain long un-discover'd ; to conceal these, the Ecclesiastical was made a prop to the Civil Government, and *no Bishop, no King*, became as current Doctrine, as, *no Penny, no Pater-noster*.

Things thus Establish'd, he who toucht the Myter, violated the Crown ; and it was thought a Paradox, to say, a *Dissenter* from the *Church*, could be *Loyal* to the *State* ; Nay, so far had they improv'd this Doctrine of *inseparable union*, that the single crime of *Dissent*, had almost Excluded the undoubted *Heir*, from the just Inheritance of Three Kingdoms, and given a fatal, as well as barbarous shock, to the very Foundation of *English Monarchy*. How far the Church of *England* were divided upon the point, remains upon Record. Opinions, which have had more than an Age to take root in, are not easily eradicated ; but time and experience opening our understandings, circumstances concurring, and providence bringing his Councils to maturity, and ready for practice ; His *M A J E S T Y*, out of His Royal Wisdom and Goodness particular to Himself, hath inverted the *Affirmative*, into the *Negative Maxim*, and publickly teaching us, that *Conscience ought not to be forc'd*, hath offer'd you a favourable opportunity, and a moment not to be neglected, to declare, that *Monarchy ought to be preserv'd*. This you have done, and the *justice* and *honour* of doing it, must not be taken from you, no, not by your malicious friend, who, p. 7, and 8. endeavours (by scandalous reflections upon the Government, as well as your selves,) to rob you of them.

Matters then (in spite of envy) are brought to this pass, that except your Hearts belie your Tongues, the benefit  
shall

shall no longer reproach the Benefactor ; nor *Dissenters*, made easie in their Consciences by the Civil Magistrate, ever more be uneasie, or ungrateful to that Government, which pardons, and protects them. Let me now ask you, whether you judge it prudential to Exclude *Catholicks* from this general Toleration, *purely* upon the account of *Conscience in matters of Faith and Worship* ? whether you will return the *Negative* into the *Affirmative* Principle, to your certain destruction ? or retain the *Negative* with an exception against *Catholicks*, to your future, more than probable extirpation ? Lastly, whether you will leave a *precedent* made *voluntarily*, and with your *own* hand, against your *own* security ? For if you shall confess, and maintain, that a free-born Subject of *England*, may in *any case*, be oppress'd *meerly for Conscience-sake* ; with what face of Justice can you excuse your selves, when the Church of *England* (restor'd to her former greatness and credit with her Church of *England* Prince,) shall pick some of you out for a Sacrifice of revenge, to the memory of her idoliz'd *Persecuting Power*, and making use of the same arguments against Them, which *she* can ever possibly urge against *Catholicks*, enter by that gap which your selves left open, to the gradual desolation of you all ? If a *Presbyterian* can be contented, that an *Independant* should suffer for his erroneous Conscience-sake, upon the promise (it may be) that the *Presbyterian* alone shall be *Indulged*, as coming nearer to the Principles of the Church of *England* ; an *Independant*, the *Anabaptist* ; the *Anabaptist*, the *Quaker*, &c. judge you, whether you all, consenting upon the *same* suggestions, that *the Catholick may be Persecuted* ; the Church of *England*, one day from the same parity of reason, may not judge it necessary, that some of you, (and when she shall be able, *all*) should be restrain'd ; If it be prudential (I say) to leave this broad gap open, pardon my mistake ; if it be not, I have gain'd the point, and proceed to the second consideration.

Whether

Whether in *Conscience* you ought to Exclude *Catholicks* from this equal Toleration, *purely for their Conscience sake*. I shall not trouble you with the Opinions of Ancient Fathers, and Learned Men, of all professions, concerning the *Question of Persecuting for Conscience-sake*; they are Arguments and Authorities equally common and applicable to us all; only by the way, they except none, whose Principles are not destructive and dangerous to Government: My Address therefore, is to your own Consciences, and I must ask you, whether you can think it equitable, to desire that *favour* and *liberty* for your selves, which you refuse to those, who have the same *reason*, *right*, and *pretences* to them, as your selves? whether on *good manners*, as well as *Conscience*, you can ask of the King, what you will not permit him to grant to his approved friends, and Men of his own Religion? whether in *Conscience* you can do worse to others, than you desire that they should do unto you? whether your *excuse*, ought to be their *crime*? In a word, whether in *Conscience* your selves can punish for *Conscience-sake*, when the *sake of your Consciences*, from the *cause of your Persecutions*, becomes the only *excuse* of your past demerits? If your Consciences can be, not only so *erroneous*, but *unjust and mischievians* too; I conceive not the law of Nations alone, but the Laws of God and Nature, will command they should be restrain'd. I shall conclude this point with the Sentence of St. *Paul* to the *Romans*, *Propter quod inexcusabilis es O homo*, &c. Therefore, thou art inexcusable O Man, whosoever thou art that judgest, *Rom. c. 2.* for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thy self, for thou that judgest dost the same things. The whole Chapter may not be unworthy your perusal.

I come next to the consideration of *Catholick Dissenters* in their *Civil Capacity*, and I conceive that in *prudence* and *Conscience*, you ought not to Exclude them from the supposed Toleration. The only reason why *Catholicks* should be Excluded, (consider'd in their *Civil Capacity*,) is, upon  
the

the pretence that they are unsafe to Government ; and that two ways, either as *Enemies to Monarchy* ; or, as too great friends to the Pope, whom they esteem Head of the *Catholick Church*. For the first, I think they are so far from being *enemies to Monarchy* in general, that the crime which hath been commonly imputed to them, in *that* of enlarging the bounds of Monarchy, and fixing the Soverain in a greater circle of power and Prerogative, than the safety of the Subject can well admit. This accusation therefore, I suppose can no ways be fast'ned upon them in *general* ; and for the *particular English Catholics* under our own Government, I am perswaded, they will not refuse to put their Loyalty upon the *Test*, and measure out their future happiness, by Examples of their past behaviour. To do them right, we must acknowledge their Lives and Fortunes were unanimously Sacrificed, and Offer'd up to the defence of King *Charles* the First ; nay, they fought for him at that very time, when (according to Capitulations between the King and His Parliament,) One condition of the *Kings Establishment*, would have prov'd the cause of their own *inevitable ruine* ; a hard tryal, and such as equals at least, the utmost glory of *passive Obedience*.

Shall we follow them with King *Charles* the Second, into Exile ? we shall there find their Loyal Charity, exceeding (if possible) their former valour ; they drain'd the small remains of their Purses to the very bottom ; they sold their Estates, and Morgag'd their Reputations and Credit ; their very Swords (become no more serviceable to him in the Field,) were converted into Necessaries for his House : The Religious Men, to compensate their absence in his Wars at home, turn'd his Soldiers of Fortune abroad, they plunder'd their own Monasteries, and Confiscated the possessions of their God, for the support of their King. They did more than equal the kindness of *Abimeleck* to a fugitive *David*, for they not only fed him with the bread of the *Lords House*, but they pawn'd the very House itself, and

and literally robb'd *Peter* to give unto *Paul*, and all this for a *banished Protestant King*, a King of a *different Religion* from their own; and one, who was so far from the hopes of making a return, by the divine Predictions of an inspired *Samuel*; that it was thought then almost out of the power of Providence to restore him.

*Gentlemen*, these are *great things*, and *great truths*; and after all, will you venture to ask of this very King, who knows all this to be true, who shar'd in these Loyal Contributions, *that* kindness for your selves, which you (I say) with your unfortunate and different merits about you, obstinately refuse to these Loyal sufferers? I think it will ill become you.

Should you possibly urge against them, some antiquated Plots, in the Reign of Queen *Elizabeth*, and King *James*; 'tis possible, they will tell you they condemn them no less than your selves, that they were particular impious Men, and 'tis hard the Children should bear those iniquities of their Fathers, which themselves renounce. But let us take all in the worse sense, and utmost Latitude; methinks, it should be neither *seemly*, nor *seasonable*, for you to become their accusers: *Claudius accuset mæchos Catalina Cethegum*?

But if you will go so far back, let me advise you to take the *West*, the *Eye*, and 48. in your way: Pardon the hint, I think it no shame to confess a publick fault, when we have as publickly repented it; especially, since the Authors of Persecutions, and inflaming promoters of animosities, and unhappy mistakes on *both* sides, were more properly the cause of all these unfortunate mischiefs, than those who must be contented to bear the reproaches; think a little calmly and impartially upon it.

Should indeed the Loyal Church of *England*, (whose prosperity hath never reduc'd her under the dangerous temptations of such fiery Persecutions, as you have suffer'd,) should she (I say) set heavy upon them, for their Disloyal misdemeanours, it would be no such wonder, *she* hath got a

right to accuse them by prescription ; but for you, in the *Act of Petitioning for Pardon, Freedom, and Security for your selves* ; for you, in such a *nick of time* to set up for accusers ; I am loath to advice, against the Reasons and Authority of so good a friend to you, as *T. W.* but in my poor judgement, you cannot be too *wary* and *cautious*, how you refresh the memory of the King, with the *reflecting name of Plots*.

Hoping that I may have offer'd what is sufficient concerning this point, (especially, since to say more, would but grate the more upon us,) I come to the Second Consideration ; How far *Catholicks* ought to be Excluded, upon the account of their *great friendship for the Pope* ?

What power the Head of a *Catholic Church*, may pretend to have over *Catholic Consciences*, in matters purely Spiritual, and in order to Salvation, is no part of my business to examine. But what right this *Head* may claim in particular in dependant Sovereign Kingdoms, or over *Catholic Consciences*, to the disturbance of such Governments, falls properly under our Consideration.

Taking it for granted, that the Pope can pretend to no Temporal or Civil Jurisdiction, in any Sovereign Kingdom, such as *England* is, for such pretence would be vain, as supposing a Kingdom to depend upon some Foreign Jurisdiction, when it is confessed she is Independent ; taking this (I say) for granted, the utmost Authority of the Pope can Extend no farther than to things purely Spiritual, that is to say, *matters of Faith*, and (let us suppose) *Discipline in the Church*. For the last, if we look into our Statutes, we shall find several Acts of Parliament, made by *Catholic Kings* and *Catholic Parliaments*, by virtue of which Acts, as well as *Magna Charta*, made and confirm'd by several *Catholic Kings*, the Church of *England* is declared *to be free*. I am not forgetful, what Disputes have hap'n'd between Popes and some of our *Catholic Princes*, concerning the Extent and Meaning of this Freedom ;  
nor



nor what ill consequences they have brought upon us ; No Kingdoms can secure themselves from troubles, if their neighbours will be quarelsome and litigious : *France* may pretend upon *Spain*, and *Spain*, as justly it may be, upon *France* ; but pretences give no right, much less a Possession ; they are to be debated between Crowned Heads themselves, and Subjects are but *Accessaries* in the quarrel. But howsoever it be, it is little to our purpose, for we are speaking of a Toleration for *Catholicks*, and that in a Kingdom, where the Authority of the Pope is Excluded by the Laws of the Land, and these Laws likely to be in the hands of *Protestant* Princes : But should the whole Nation, with its King, in process of time, turn *Roman Catholicks*, it's not to be doubted, but the Government in such a case will take care of it self, and its own rights ; and from what we yet see, we have no reason to fear, that the Ecclesiastical Government of *England* will, at these years, become a Pupil, and submit to the *ferula* and *tutelage* of *Rome*.

The great Question is, whether the Authority, which the Pope may pretend to, and *Catholicks* own, in matters of Faith, may probably create any such disturbances in the Government, as ought to Exclude *Catholicks* from the benefits of this Toleration ? and I conceive, it ought not.

If there were no *Catholic* Kingdoms happy, and flourishing in the World, whose Subjects own this Authority, the Question might admit of some Dispute ; or if no *Catholic* Subjects were Loyal and peaceable under their *Protestant* Princes, the Question might be decided against us ; but the contrary to both being demonstrably plain, as by many Instances may be made appear ; the Question falleth directly upon *English Catholicks*, and I hope they will not suffer any prejudice by it.

The only Objection which presses hard upon them, is, (as far as I can perceive) the Deposing Doctrine in case of *Herese*, which being (as *Protestants* tell us) an Article of their Faith : It must be confess'd, if they be True to their

*Faith*, they may be False to their *King*; and their Loyalty is but *Tenant at will* to the *Pope*, and subject to Forfeiture, according to the Humour of every Capricious Lord.

It were hard, after the many Eminent Instances of their upright and un-biass'd Loyalty to *Protestant* Princes, that they should be suspected in this Conjunction; but we cannot be too careful in matters of so great Consequence: In short then, do they believe, *As matter of Faith*, That the *Pope* hath Power to *Depose* a Sovereign *Heretical Prince*, and *Absolve* his Subjects from their Fidelity and Oath of *Allegiance*? Ask them, they answer unanimously, No. The Church of *England* endeavours to prove the Affirmative upon them. 'Tis strange, that men should not be permitted to know their own mind, and whilst their Enemies frame a *Creed*, which they utterly refuse to Subscribe, shall nevertheless be condemn'd for believing It. I know none of us can be safe at this rate, since 'tis unreasonable to expect that Credit, which we refuse to give. For my own part, I am apt to believe them, and the rather, because I find a very Powerful Kingdom, and all strict *Catholicks*, publicly declaring against this *Deposing Doctrine*; I mean, that of *France*, where by an *Edict* of the King published 1683. by the whole *Clergy* of *France*, *University*, *Sorbonne*, and *Canonists*, It is declar'd (so far as it concerns our purpose) as follows, *Reges & Principes in Temporalibus nulli Ecclesiastica potestati Dei Ordinatione subiaci, neque Autoritate Clavium Ecclesiæ directè vel indirectè deponi, aut illorum subditos eximi a fide atque obedientia, ac præstito fidelitatis Sacramento solvi posse, &c.* That Kings and Princes, in *Temporals*, are subject by the Ordinance of God to no Ecclesiastical Power; neither can they be Depos'd directly or indirectly by Authority of the Keys of the Church, nor their Subjects exempted from their Faith and Obedience, nor absolv'd from their Oath of Allegiance, &c.

It is plain then, that *Catholicks* may remain good Catholics, and own the Supremacy of the *Pope*, as Head of the  
Catholic



*Catholick Church*, without any Obligation to believe the Deposing Doctrine; and if the *French*, why not the *English Catholics*? especially, since they as publickly declare the same; and by their practice, confirm the truth and sincerity of their Profession. If you Object against them some *Catholick* Authors, who may possibly have defended this Doctrine, they may answer you, that should the assurance of the Loyalty which your selves now profess, be rryed by some of your Anti-Monarchicall Books, written by many of your *Heads*, and learnedest Men among you; the condition of your desired Toleration would prove too weak, to venture a perpetual Legal Establishment upon it.

To Conclude, it is evident by what hath been already said, that there is no *necessity* upon *Catholicks* to believe the Deposing Doctrine: If there be no *necessity* they should, there is a great *conveniency* they should not; and if they solemnly declare they *do not*, I know not what greater security you can have of the truth and faith of a Christian.

I have only one word more to add, which though it be a little forein to our present discourse, yet it is fit we say somewhat concerning it; and I know not what head to bring it under more properly, than that of the *Popes Authority*. It is an Objection from a supposed restoration of Abby-Lands; I mention it also the rather, because, some think, it is the chiefest consideration, which hath moved the indignation of *T. W.* against *Catholicks*.

I doubt not, but the late Treatise concerning Abby-Lands may be sufficient to satisfy any Impartial Reader; I shall only therefore propose two things, that Abby-Lands cannot possibly be taken from us, but by these two ways. 1. *By Act of Parliament*. And 2. *By Free Donation*; and both ways seem impossible. Suppose then, that the Nation hath no mind to part from her Abby-Lands, it is impossible, in that mind, she should ever lose them. Admitting now, that *Catholicks* in time should become the majority of the Nation, the majority of Abby-Lands would be then in the

the majority of the Nation ; let us grant also, that the majority of the Two Houses in Parliament should in time be *Catholicks* ; the majority of Abby-Lands would be still in the hand of the majority of the Members of Parliament. How then can it happen, that the Abby-Lands should be taken away from Men, who will have it always in their power to keep them ? 'tis as much as to say, the *Nation* will take from the *Nation*, what the *Nation* is resolved never to part withall ; which is so *absurd*, that it is a contradiction *in terminis*.

If it be urg'd, that the Pope may oblige *Catholicks*, in Conscience, to restore them, it must be consider'd, that there are Acts of Parliament, that is to say, the Laws of the Land in the way ; and it may be easily answer'd, that the Pope hath nothing to do with Parliaments, or the Laws of the Land. The case might be otherwise, if the possessions of these Lands were not secured to us by the Law, and such as none but our selves can repeal, how far Conscience might work upon some Men, in that case, I know not.

But Secondly, It is not in our power to give them away our selves, whilst the Laws are in force ; for the Statute of *Mort-Main*, and other subsequent Statutes concerning Religious Charities, do positively restrain us ; so that we have still our own Laws for our security, and it is ridiculous to suppose, that we should voluntarily pull down that fence, which we are sensible preserves us. Whilst the Laws therefore remain unrepeal'd, *Catholicks* will have the same *reasons*, and the same *right*, to keep their Abby-Land to the Worlds end, (nay, though all the Nation should turn *Catholicks* ;) as *Catholicks* have at present, that is to say, the Laws will not permit them to be restor'd ; and it is evident, that the present *English Catholicks* have as much of Abby-Lands in their possession (proportionable to their number,) as *Protestants* themselves.

Besides, if we could and would restore them, who are there, that have right to receive them ? they who might have

have had a right to enjoy them, are long since rotten in their Graves; Titular Abbats (if any such there be) are meer *Phantasms*, they are *Monks* unborn, and not so much as *Embrios* in the Womb of Time; and shall we return our Lands to the Birds of the Air, and the Beasts of the Field, or imaginary Beings, not so proper to enjoy them, as they? Were there not a hundred invincible Reasons against the danger of losing our Abbey-Lands: Yet this alone were sufficient, that Governments are grown wiser than formerly they were, and the Inconveniencies which some Kingdoms labour under, from the *Dead weight* of Numerous Monasteries, are more than sufficient, for other Kingdoms which are free, to take warning from those Examples. *England* besides (of all Kingdoms) is the most secure from falling under these mischiefs, for it is plain, that our Nation wants Hands; the *Plague* and the *Sword*, and our *Forein Plantations* have so drain'd our Vital Blood, that it can hardly circulate within our Politick Body; and shall we despirit that which remains, by immuring greater numbers of Serviceable Hands, and cutting them off from being Members of the State? I am persuaded, that two Ages of the most vigorous Health, Peace, and Prosperity which the Nation ever enjoy'd, will hardly restore her to her former necessary strength, and permit her in Policy to grant an useles unprofitable ease to any considerable number of her Subjects.

Having thus endeavour'd to Answer the first great Question, which I hope I have done to the satisfaction of all Impartial Readers, I might spare my self and you the trouble of speaking to the Second: For, if *Protestant Dissenters*, in Prudence and Conscience, ought not to refuse the present propos'd Legal Toleration upon the single condition of Including *Catholicke*: I think there can be no good reason given, why they should defer it untill the next Succession: But that no rub may seem to lye in the way of our common Happiness; I shall offer a word or two concerning the second Question.

Que-

Question 2. Whether Protestant Dissenters, in prudence and Conscience, ought to expect the proposed Toleration, until the next Succession; upon the single consideration, that Catholick Dissenters might probably be then Excluded?

*Procrastination* is dangerous; the success of *Fabius* gives no encouragement to follow his Example in different Circumstances: We are now in a Treaty of Peace, and he who holds our Fortunes in his Hands, offers to *Secure Us*, but will *Persecute none*. If we refuse to accept the present Mercy offer'd us, in hopes to receive it hereafter from another Hand, the motives both of our *Neglect* and *Hopes*, must be *Plain, Certain, and Demonstrably Evident*, or else we Tempt Providence, instead of Trusting him; and shutting him out of doors when he comes to Visit us, we give him just cause to shut the door upon us, when, at *Our own time*, we shall seek his Assistance.

I have given you my Opinion concerning the first main Question; there is little to be consider'd in this second, but the *Evidence of your hopes*, and the strong Reason to persuade you, that they will not be in vain.

There are two general *Objects* of your Hopes, one, *That Your selves shall be Tolerated*, The other, *That Catholicks shall be Excluded in the next Succession*. From the first general *Object*, these things will fall naturally under the consideration of a Rational Thinking man: First, *what*, and *how long*, you must suffer, until your Hopes can be accomplish'd? Secondly, *What Persons* they are, from whose approved *Goodness* and *Kindness* to you, you ground the assurance of your Hopes? Thirdly, *What Accidents* may happen to frustrate their good Intentions, and your Expectations? And *Lastly*, what *Security* you will expect from those suppos'd Friends, and the next Successor, that you shall Truly and Faithfully receive the reward of your great confidence in them, I mean, a *Toleration to Content*?

To the First, *What* you must suffer until your Hopes be accomplish'd, I have no Commission to tell you; but 'tis most probable you will suffer the just Repentment of a sensible Prince for his *despised Mercy*. Into what particulars, and concerns of your Lives his Displeasure may extend, and how many ways affect you, yourselves *Are*, or *Will* be best able to Judge. But the influence of Kings is great, and few can live within the Sphere of their *Orbs*, without being sensible of their different *Aspects*.

*Secondly*, You will suffer under the stings and remorse of an ungrateful Conscience, *Ingratum si dixeris*, &c. To call a man Ungrateful, is to load him with all manner of Reproaches: Ingratitude is such a Vice, as would tarnish the best of Virtues, and nips the merit and hopes of Friendship in the bud. It is besides, a dangerous recommendation of your selves to your new Church of *England* Friends, from whom you expect such great performances; and creating a Jealousy of you, from what they *See*, may cool their hopes of that grateful return from you, which they Promise to themselves hereafter. *Gratitude* then, if it be not your *Virtue*, it is at least your *Interest*; and if you fail in *both*, your reputation turns *Bankrupt*, and there is no *Compounding* where there is nothing to be pay'd.

*Thirdly* and lastly, You will suffer the continual Fears and Apprehensions of a possible disappointment: And, which is no small aggravation, your Repentance will come too late, and your Persecutions remain without Pity, as well as without Remedy. And for the just causes of your Fear, I shall lay them plainly before you hereafter.

But *2dly*, *How long* you must suffer, I cannot tell you: The *Lives* of Princes, and their *Hearts* too are in the Hands of God; and he who can command the *Life* of our present Sovereign, may turn the *Heart* of the next. But this we know to our Comfort, that His present Majesty hath not *liv'd so fast*, but he may live as *long*, at least, long enough to see the neglect of his Mercy, reveng'd by the

Execution of his Justice; for there are few of us so exact, who are not sometimes obnoxious: If the Prayers of good men may prevail, the bad may be out in their account: However, a Lease of *Danger, Shame, and Fear* for *such a Life*, is but an uncomfortable purchase, and I should think 'twere much better to *surrender*, than keep it.

I come now to the second Consideration, what *Persons* they are from whose approv'd Goodness and Kindness to you, you ground the assurance of your Hopes. It is but reasonable to believe, that a man who refuseth a present Kindness, in hopes to receive it from another Friend hereafter, hath a greater Opinion of the Friendship of him from whom he *Expects* it, than of him who *Offers* it. Applying this proposition to your selves; the two *Persons* intended, are the *King*, and the *Church of England*. To prove the King is your Friend, and the Church of *England* your Enemy, seems to me altogether as impertinent, as to prove a man my Friend who Rescueth me out of the hands of Pyrats; or the Pirate my Enemy, whilst upon my Back and Feet, I retain still the Fetters and Marks of his Barbarous Cruelty, and my own former Slavery. But since your *Flourishing* Friend *T. W.* would pass Paradoxes upon you, instead of sound Reason, and persuade you to suspect your Friend, that you might be sure to fall again under the Hands of your Enemies, I shall presume to speak a word or two of the King.

Among many *Fanciful* Suggestions, your Friend tells you p. 2. *That your Catholick Friends* (meaning, or at least, including the King) *did not make you their choice, but their refuge.* Are you then their *Refuge*? Sanctuaries were inviolable among the worst of *Heathens*, and will you permit your Friend the Church of *England* to lay it to your charge that you *twice* Betray'd your Master, and Sold *again* your King? But how come you not to be his *Choice*, as is pretended? Would you have had the King to take you into his Bosom, with your *Anti-monarchical* Principles about you



you, your *Anti-monarchical Swords and Pistols*, and *Anti-monarchical Arms* upon you? I think you could not expect it. You were first in his *Wishes*, though possibly second in his *Esteem*; he Tolerated your Religious Principles, *before* he was King; and *when* He was King, wish'd your Secular Principles would have permitted him to have eas'd your Consciences, with safety to the Government. If he *was* mistaken, Thank your good Old Friends; if He *be* mistaken (which you know best) you reap the Benefit of his generous Errour, and 'twere hard you should make *Him*, or his Friends, suffer for it. His Indulgence upon the supposed terms of your Civil Obedience, is no new *Trick to serve a Turn*; For I appeal to your selves, whether he hath not often told you, *before*, and *since* he was King, that it was *ever* his Opinion, *That Conscience ought not to be forc'd*.

Pag. 3. But there is *no Inclination to you, no quarter for you, but to usher in Liberty for themselves*. Liberty for themselves? What, was not the *Kings Chappel* open when you were yet in the *West*? Is the King *afraid* to give Ease to his Friends, after a total Victory, when he scorn'd the danger that look'd him in the Face? I am persuaded your selves do not believe this Heroick Mind capable of *Fear* or *Flattery*? How far he might fear his Friends, I know not; *But ill men only, and Cowards fear their Enemies*. Think not then so poorly of him, that he Dissembles; nor provoke him by an unworthy Jealousy: An Heroick King hath *Double Divinity* about him, and his *Auxiliary Angels*, who have been Faithful to him in the most desperate Occasions, when yet a *Subject*, will not Desert him under their greater Obligations and Charge to Protect a *Crowned-Head*:

But why *No Inclination to you, why No quarter for you*? Not if the Hypocrite lyes at your door; not if you retain your objected *Anti-monarchical Principles*; your *Loyalty* is the only *Condition* of the *Obligation*, which is in *your* Power, and on *your* part to perform. The King hath granted you a *present Toleration*, and intends with your Concur-

rence, to make it his *Legacy* to you, and *Your perpetual Inheritance*, by a fundamental Law ; and is this wanting an *Inclination*, is this *giving no quarter to you*? What would you have him to do more, except Sacrificing *His* Friends to the revenge of *your* Enemies. Consider a little with your selves, (it is not so long, but some of you may remember it,) Was there not a Bill brought in to the House of *Parliament* after the late Kings Restoration, by which *Catholicks* were to be Tolerated, whilst you were Persecuted? Your Merits (which I suppose you have not forgot) ran as high as ever ; the King a *Protestant* ; and your Church of *England* Friends (to your Sorrow) in their greatest Reputation. Change the Scene, doth not his present *Catholick* Majesty, whilst your Deserts are of a different Nature, and hardly *Pen-feather'd*, offer to establish you upon the *same* foot and Foundation of Liberty with his own *Catholick* Subjects ? If you will be deceiv'd with Superficial flashes of Wit, against the Evidence of Sense ; The *Mischief*, as well as *Sin* will lye at your own doors.

Next, we must consider the magnified *kindness* of your new Church of *England* friends. There is no Argument like constant Experience, Circumstances and Times may change, but Nature will not ; we may force her for a season, but she returns to her former bent. What a friend to you the Church of *England* will prove, we may guess ; First, By what she hath been ; Secondly, By the motives of her pretended change ; And Lastly, By the principles of her Establish'd Religion.

To the First ; It would be melancholly as well as tedious, to begin, and follow the Church of *England* in her Persecuting Acts ; malice hath succeeded from Generation to Generation, and your afflictions are become the most *entire* part of your Inheritances ; your fore-fathers might indeed have eaten those sowre Grapes, with which your teeth are set on edge ; but what matters it, whether you feel the *first*, or *last* lashes of her severity ; she hath never slack'ned her hand,



hand, but when the Rod was taken out of it by force; and if from a *super-erogating* sense of your crimes, you think you have not been yet chastiz'd enough, you do well to restore it to her. If you fear she should prove too gentle, comfort your selves from some of her late undeniable actions, which are not so ancient, as to have out-liv'd the memory of Man.

When the late King was restor'd to his Kingdoms, (and you know by whom) a Toleration was the *price* of his return, and he *paid* it (as far as he could) by his Royal Declaration from *Breda*; and did not the Church of *England*, as soon as ever she was restor'd to her long sequestred power, restor'd by your means, (I say) did she not turn *that very* power against you? Can you ever pretend to deserve *better* from her, or can she ever have a *better* opportunity to return her acknowledgements? But let us take her in cool blood, and when we may reasonably suppose *the bitter taste of your rough usage to her in other times*, to be worn off, or at least palliated by those larger Tables, and more delicate Food, which your Loyalty had procured for her. Have you forgot, that she bought the late Kings actual *Indulgence* off, with a *price*, and pacified your selves with a *promise*, which she never performed? nay, did she not fall a Persecuting afresh, and made you pay a *sevre* reckoning, for the *sweet* forbidden Fruits which you had but just began to taste? and after this, will you trust the Church of *England* a third time? The *Italian* Proverb tells us, That if a Man deceive me once, *it is his fault*; if he deceive me twice, *it is my fault*; and will you be so Credulous, as to let her deceive you the third time? what Proverb will be able to reach so extravagant and unparallel'd a folly?

Shall she impose upon you, and bubble you *now* again? *now* (I say) when your happiness is in your own power, and her self, neither *is*, nor possibly ever *will* be able to perform her promise to you, though she would? did she not lash you to the last gasp of her power, when she could scarce hold

hold her dear scourge in her enteebled hand ; and can you now believe her your friend ? feel upon your backs, look upon your Estates, send into forein Plantations, visit the Prisons, and examine your Purses ; and if these testifie her friendship, never forsake it, adhere to her, and resign up the *remainder* of your Lives and Fortunes to the mercy of this good old friend : I dare warrant you, in time, you will find more such credible Witnesses to the purpose ; and are *these* persons to build your hopes upon ? *voluntary* hopes, for which you exchange a *real Possession* ? if your Faith be strong enough to swallow such *prodigious, senseless* hopes, never quarrel with *Transubstantiation*, and *Popish Miracles*, for the *Dissenters Church* will perform, what your friend *T. W.* despairs to find in the *Roman* ; I mean *she will be brought to bed of a Miracle*, exceeding the whole Volume of the *Popish Legend*.

But Secondly, By what hath been already said, (and ten times more that might be said,) it is demonstrably plain, that the Church of *England* hath ever been your enemies, *quid verbis opus est, cum facta videam*. But in this conjuncture, we are told of some overtures tending towards friendship. It is a maxim as ancient as *Greece*, and the *Trojan-War*, *That the guists of Enemies are to be suspected*. I shall never appear an Advocate against Friendship, and a sincere reconciliation : On the contrary, I wish to God that all our unchristian Animosities were totally becalm'd, and our Interests, Passions, and false Zeal, which mov'd us, levell'd with the *Board* ; but neither Reason, nor Religion, forbids us to be cautious : A false friendship is like coals cover'd with ashes, the fire is not put out, but rather more *intense*, by being thus conceal'd : A prudent Man will search the ashes, especially if his House hath been burnt about him *twice* before, from the same neglect. This I take to be your case, and in my opinion well worth your examining.

The Church of *England* is now in affliction, and *meerly* from the danger of losing her *power* ; and is it probable  
she

she should part from it frankly, and without reserve, when  
 she shall come again to be out of the danger of having it  
 taken from her? Her power lyes agonizing, and she pre-  
 tends to repent the ill use of it. *The Devil was sick*, (if  
 you remember it,) but we know, how the Penitent kept  
 his promise when he was well. The Church of *England*  
 would be your friend, because she hopes, by your assistance,  
 to preserve her Power until a better day, or at least keep  
 off the *ill one*: Had she no Interest in this proposition, or  
 You no palpable disadvantage. I would almost persuade  
 you to accept her friendship; But are not the terms totally  
 disproportionable? Nay, doth not her condescension, meer-  
 ly to keep up her power, render her highly suspected; that  
 she never intends to part from it? Is she so stiff for nothing,  
 and so inflexible, not to part with *that*, which she will  
 never use? Her pretence for fear of *Catholicks*, is so very  
 bare and thin, that it is so far from covering her shame, as  
 it discovers the nakedness of her malice, even to Men who  
 are loth to see it. For besides the Laws which are already  
 in force, and what may be still in her or your power to  
 add, for the further security of all her priviledges, except  
 her *Persecuting Power*; have you not *Two Hundred to One*  
*the better of the Bett*? and does not your friend tell you,  
*That to lose those odds would be next to impossible*? Will they  
 not be always in your Possessions, if you stick to your  
 Principles? and are *you*, or *she*, afraid of being *reason'd*  
 out of your Religion? or have *Catholicks* any Arms to  
 force you, (with these odds against them;) besides their  
*Pens*? and do you apprehend *their* danger so much, as to  
 Exclude their persons, and suspend your selves from the  
 Civil Rights of Free-born Subjects, because they would  
 prove their Religion to be better than yours? Do you not  
 all pretend the same thing, one against another? would  
 you seem to despair of your Cause, and defend your selves  
 against their *Pens*, with *secular* Arms of Fire and Faggot,  
 Sequestrations and Proscriptions, and Temporal Advan-  
 tages,

tages, unworthy the Religion you profess? Or, (supposing the most, ) that the majority of you should turn *Catholic* Converts, (which without more Miracles and Sanctity than are generally found in the World, is not likely soon to come to pass ; ) can you then forget and lay by your compassionate sense of your former fellow-sufferers ? or will it not be your own faults if you do ? I see no manner of reason then, which should move the Church of *England* in this conjuncture, to solicit your friendship, and expose her own, even till 'tis *blown* open, except this *single* one, of preserving her *Persecuting Power*, and desperately hazarding your *security* ; And this I think sufficient to make you jealously careful.

Lastly, supposing the Church of *England* would be sincerely your Friend, and that the Motives appear'd such as might encourage you to believe her ; you are now to consider, whether, according to her Principles, and the Constitution of her Ecclesiastical Government, she really *Can* be your Friend in the propos'd Case of a *Toleration*.

The Church of *England* ( renouncing her Infallibility, and declaring the *Bible* to be our common Rule of Faith ) must have appear'd grossly unjust, both before God and Man, had she, upon *these single Principles*, excluded men following her own common Rule (though differing in Opinion from her, ) from those Ecclesiastical Preferments, and warm Benefices, which nevertheless she resolv'd to secure to her self. To compass this, she struck in with the Civil Magistrate, and both together rais'd such a Fence about her, guarded also by a two-edg'd Sword, of Ecclesiastical Censures, and Temporal Punishments, as none could enter her narrow Gates, except they renounc'd what they believ'd, or had the good fortune to believe as she did. Nor yet was this sufficient ; For fearing that better reason (it may be, ) might gain in time many Deserters from her, she watch'd her passage so strictly, that it was not safe, at last in Conscience, to be within, or in *Prudence* without her Pale,  
and

and Persecutions establish'd by *Law*, were sent out as *Evangelists*, and thought the surest means to propagate her *Gospel*. Then came out *Acts of Parliament* from the *Civil*; and *Canons* from the *Ecclesiastical Power*: I doubt not but you are acquainted with both, particularly from the *4th*. to the last *Canon* of the first Chapter: As also, *Can. 65*. where men are *Excited to Procure out Writs, De Excommunicato Capiendo* in order to Temporal Punishment.

The Church of *England* then was *Founded* in Persecution, *Subsists* by Persecution, and hath brought Persecution into the very *Heart* of her *Canons*; and can you believe, she will willingly pull down her Fence, destroy her Foundation, Subsistence, and a Fundamental Principle of her Religion? Whilst she is the Church of *England*, she cannot, and if she cannot, Judge you, whether she will. For in respect *purely* of Religion, she stands upon the same common bottom of *Reformation*, with the *Dissenters*, and is distinguish'd from them chiefly by *This*, That the *Law* gives her Power to punish, but not to them; wherefore the day she loseth her Power, she is no more than they are, and as undistinguishable, save by the difference of her *Tenets*; let her Friend therefore write for her as finely as he will, she will never part from this distinguishing Power, if she can keep it.

And to say truth, her Religion and her Interest are so closely interwoven, and so wisely united, that they strengthen each other; and if you take away one, 'tis odds that the other falls to the ground. If then you expect from her, what in Safety and Conscience she cannot give you, she will be sooner excus'd for the breach of her Promise, than you for your inconsiderate Incredulity.

I come now to the third Consideration. *What accidents may happen to frustrate the Church of England's pretended good Intentions, and your Expectations.* It is impossible to foresee all that may happen, prudent Men will provide against possible dangers, and whilst the best takes care of it self, a wise Man will take care of the worst. The accidents which seem most probable to me are these. *First*, The King may live so long, until *Catholicks*, by the great Interest which they may have in the Government, (especially since both the Church of *England* and your selves by Disobliging the King, exclude your selves from His Favour and Confidence) by the Interest (I say) which they may have in the Government, their good Behaviour in it, and Faithful Administration of it; they may so recommend themselves, and seem useful to the next Successor, that

he may think it as unreasonable to exclude them the Benefit of a general *Toleration*, as his present Majesty. *Secondly*, The Church of *England* and they may become better Friends; *Nul violentum diuturnum*, It is natural for excessive Heats to produce Showers; And both sides may relent, which will still make your case the worse: *Thirdly*, It is possible, the Church of *England* and you may not remain long in so good Intelligence: Nay, it would be most strange if you should, for of necessity you would interfere so of en, that every rub would anger and fret the old Sore so tenderly skind over. Wanting *But* the Favour of the King, she will not be able to pay in the Obligation of your Suffering for her sake, so often as (it may be) your occasions may require, and new Friendships, are like Sutes at Law, if Men starve their Cause, 'tis two to one but they lose it. *Fourthly*, The Church of *England* may probably fear the danger of your increafe upon her, Plants are apt to shoot out in Sun-shiny weather; in such Case the necessity of her own preservation will oblige her to restrain you, if she can, except she intends to turn Non-conforming Convert (as your Friend seems much to insinuate) and then it were highly Prudential, to put your selves at Ease, and in a more Inviting condition, as soon as you can; for whatsoever men may say in their *Chaleur Neophyte*, and heat of their Zeal, 'tis natural to love a saving bargain. *Fifthly*, Your surest Church of *England* Friends, and greatest Projectors may be call'd to Heaven, and men of different Inclinations to you put in their places: Your best security would be then remov'd in spite of your teeths, and you, who count it no less than a *Test Idolatry* to pray to *Saints*, would have no means left to exact the performance of their Obligation. But *Lastly*, The next *Successor* may possibly have a better Opinion of the *Catholic Religion*, and a worse of your *Principles* either *now*, or *hereafter*, than you are taught to believe. And 'tis no loose conjecture, that he, who hath most reason to know, offers no unkindness to you, when he invites you to accept of the present opportunity. Many other accidents may probably happen to disappoint your Hopes, and from thence to establish your Inevitable ruine. But these being (I think) sufficient to make men circumspect, especially when they are not necessitated, and thrown upon these Hopes. I come to the last consideration *What Security you expect from the Church of England, and the next Successor, that you shall not be disappointed.*

I do not pretend to enter into the secret of your Cabals you have always preserv'd the Reputation of men, who understand no less  
your



your temporal than spiritual concerns. I doubt not then, but you will take such sure Infallible measures, as will excuse your present neglect to all the World. I should reflect therefore upon your easiness, (no less than this Artificial Author hath done,) could I apprehend that a loose shuffling Paper, sticht together with improbable conjectures, demonstrable mistakes, nothing at all pretended to be proved, and Writ by you know not whom, or at best, by a man, whose private Interest, Passion, Malice, and Revenge, have evidently transported him beyond the bounds of Truth, Modesty, and the plain arguments of a true and sincere Friendship. I should reflect upon you, (I say) could I imagine that these considerations should sway you against your present Interest, and oblige you to seek for your Goods, when they shall be seiz'd for *Non-Conformity*, from an uncertain *T. W.* who hath not so much as produced his Commission from the Church of *England* to Treat with you: The reasons of a Friend ought to be calm, evident, and unsophisticate: Too much of heat, and trick, creates a jealousy; and if ever men ought to be suspicious, it is upon this occasion, and this conjuncture. What engagements you may have, or expect from the next Successor, I know not; what I have hinted, is sufficient to men of your understanding; especially since my Zeal for the common good and prosperity of the Nation, hath obliged me to exceed the utmost limits of a *Letter*. I shall speak therefore but one word to the second and last object of your hopes, *viz. That Catholicks may be Excluded in the next Succession.*

What I have already said, concerning your *hopes* and *fears*, may be sufficient in answer to this point. I shall only therefore add, that since *Catholicks* are equally Tolerated in *Holland*, with other Dissenters, differing from the Establish'd Religion of that *Commonwealth*. Since they have their publick Chapels at *Amsterdam*, *Rotterdam*, and most of the great Towns in *Holland*, and since they approve themselves both *faithful* and *useful Subjects* to that Government: It is more than probable, that you will not easily persuade the next Successor (acquainted with these truths) that *English Catholicks*, (of all other places in the World) are only to be Excluded a Toleration in *England*. Your Reasons I say must be strong and convincing, and such as we have not yet heard, especially since *that bargain and sale* is not likely to prevail so much with a Prince, who will rather bring *Accessions* to the Crown, than expect *that* (upon hard terms) from the Subject, which the necessities of other Princes have obliged them to demand.

What

What influence the Example and Conduct of the *best of Fathers* may have upon the *best of Daughters*, (who beside will find by experience, that the difference of Religion in their Princes, neither add nor diminish from the constant Loyalty of her *Catholick* Subjects,) I know not: But 'tis more than probable, she will not hate those, whom her Father lov'd, and, who upon no account, but that *single one of difference in Opinion*, can merit her disfavour.

The sum of all is this; An equal Toleration, if any, is *most just*. The present time, the most *Eligible*; your hopes at best, *uncertain*; your Counsellor, of all mankind (it may be) the *most to be suspected*. If then you will depend upon his *private and false* Insinuations, rather than the *publick and Sacred* Word of a King, who never yet was known to have broke it, the world will always blame you, but no man I think will ever pity the extremity of your distress, when ever it shall come upon you.

To conclude, if you shall think it fit in *prudence* and in *conscience*, to leave an *entailed misery* to your posterity, when the King is willing to joyn in *cutting it off* by a *Legal Toleration*, and to make the exercise of your Religion as free and as perpetual an Inheritance to you, as your *Liberties and Properties*, so often secur'd by *Magna Charta*; excuse the mistaken Zeal, and accept the good Intentions of

GENTLEMEN,

Your most faithful humble Servant

T. G.

F I N I S.



